

## IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANT: HOFFMEIER, Dieter ) GROUP ART UNIT:  
SERIAL NO.: PCT/DE00/02921 ) EXAMINER:  
FILED : August 25, 2000 ) CUSTOMER NO. 000293  
FOR: MUD SUCTION UNIT ) ATT'Y DOCKET: 13924NP

#21/ke  
A

The Commissioner of Patents  
and Trade-marks  
Washington, D.C. 20231  
U.S.A.

Dear Sir:

**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

Prior to examining the application filed herewith, kindly amend the application as follows.

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend claims 1 to 7 as follows.

1. (Amended) Mud suction unit having a receiving container, to which a suction element is attached for drawing in a muddy fluid and a discharging element for setting the muddy fluid that has been drawn in into motion, and a motor for generating a suction flow, the motor being shut off when a filling limit of the muddy fluid is reached, characterized therein that the discharging element comprises a vacuum valve which is closed during a suction process due to the negative pressure present in the receiving container and opened when the motor is switched off due to the internal pressure present in the receiving container.
2. (Amended) Mud suction unit according to claim 1, characterized therein that the motor is connected with a ball valve which is situated in the area of a filling limit in the receiving container and which closes when the filling limit is reached.
3. (Amended) Mud suction unit according to claim 1, characterized therein that the receiving container has a connection for the suction element in an upper part of the receiving container at the cover end and a connection for the discharging element in a lower part of the receiving container at the bottom end.